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Holly and
Easter-
Lilies..





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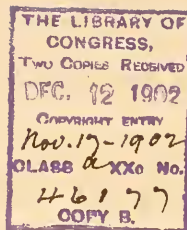
HOLLY AND EASTER-LILIES.



By Alfred Lambourne



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ALFRED LAMBOURNE.

To My Mother

HOLLY AND EASTER-LILIES.

I.



ULL on the morn doth rise
the Easter-Hymn;
Glad words of praise this
time auspicious hail;
Of that event beyond the
years grown dim,
Sweet living voices sing the wondrous tale.
The world's great miracle anew they tell
In joyous accents, pure, and silver clear;
The tidings marvelous, exultant swell,
With words of promise, fill the listening
ear.
Hark! how the thoughts inspiring buoy-
ant rise,
As unto tribes and peoples countless
sung;
The message told to all beneath the skies,
In ancient speech or fresh-created tongue—
The hymn that One Beloved glorifies
All varied climes and distant lands among.

II.



SEE! while strains of Easter
joyance grow,
Three masters,holly-wreath'd,
look from the wall—

One who the fairness of the
earth did show,

One from whose lips all beauty-truths did
fall,

And one who purest sang in golden
rhyme—

Supreme in art, in eloquence and song,
Not merely for a day but for all time,
Three masters whom the world will cher-
ish long !

But what of Him, Great Master of all men,
Who, kiss-betrayed, yet for all sorrow
wept?

Who Mercy added to commandments ten;
By whose sad tomb the Roman vigil kept;
Who first appeared unto the loved one's
ken;

He who awoke the chords of love that
slept?

III.



HE Christmas Holly in the
wreaths is dead;
Each crisp and withered leaf
is wan of hue,
As drops of precious blood,
its berries red,
Like those that once the cruel spear-
point drew.
And underneath the sad, death-conquered
leaves,
Fit emblems of distrust's and fear's dark
hour,
Uprises from the mold and life achieves—
Breaks into crowns the tall, white, Easter
Flower.
And here the eyes filled with a love pro-
found,
His who makes sacred still that far-off
morn,
One more than all the proudest kings
renowned—
The world's wide Light though in a
stable born,
Who was with lilies nor with myrtle
crowned,
He who wore here instead the crown of
thorn.

IV.



LOOK! the Messiah, low in
manger laid!
Whose birth the gates of hope
did swift unbar;
To whom the shepherds
adoration paid;
The Magi, star-led, came from lands afar;
Who o'er each little head fond blessings
spake;
Between the pair of thieves was crucified;
Who with His blood did world-atonement
make,
Now wears a crown of light on earth
denied.
The Lord and Master who did suffer pain,
Who labored meek amid the cedar chips;
The learned Rabbis tasked as youth, in
vain,
Who was reviled, mock-sceptered, scourged
with whips:
The Parable of Lilies hear again,
Sweet words that trembled on His full,
ripe lips.

V.



O! He whose words still seek
the human heart,
Jesus of Nazareth, Mary's
loved son,

Whose fame is known in ham-
let, town and mart,

Resplendent grown from lowliness begun.
He who would ease the laden human
breast,

Rebuked the Pharisees who fain would
kill;

Who on a stone needs lay His head in
rest

Twixt Bethlehem and Calvary's dark hill.
O, at the door is that low summons
heard—

Will now unfold the rusted bolt and lock?
Can love and duty longer be deferred
To gentle shepherd who would lead His
flock?

Rank nettles, ivy, noisome weeds, all gird
The closed door where long He stands to
knock.

VI.



H, CHRIST, loved Son of
Man, we saw Thy cross !
Full hard the cross of doubt
and pain to bear;
What gift of knowledge shall
make up the loss,
If we to empty despond are made heir?
If trust and confidence to questions turn,
When love and hope are made the sport
of time;
If in the brain all wisdom anxious burn,
And cold doubt lies upon the heart like
slime?
O, unto doubt itself, Ye bring a hope—
Unbound by selfish or by narrow creed,
That bids us mid dead formalisms grope,
That leaned on, fails us like a broken
reed,—
But like Thy mighty love of boundless
scope—
With cross we follow where Thy footsteps
lead !

VII.



THE CROSS of earth, we
carry in the dark,
Grove for the pleasure that
we seldom find;
The marshy light mistake for
sacred spark,
And stumble oft, blind leaders of the
blind.
Yet truth to reach, to grasp, our thoughts
aspire,
We fain would out the mass of error
burst,
But, in the strife unequal, oft we tire,
As men upon a desert parch with thirst.
O sinfulness the stream of life pollutes,
And acrid sorrow doth the heart corrode;
Upon our lips is taste of dead-sea fruits,
The flesh is weak beneath its heavy load;
In sore distress we cry, or else are mute,
Faint and weary, on life's toilsome road.

VIII.



WAY with all sad thoughts,
this time of bloom !

Hail now, bright joy of fresh-
awakened spring,

The Easter-Lilies and the
broken tomb,

When nature, one vast choir, begins to
sing !

The crumbling holly tells of death, alas !
But on each limb, the bursting buds all
gleam ;

And warm, the south winds touch the
cheek, and pass

In whispers soft, that benedictions seem.

So, after winter's cold and driven sleet,
The blood is stirred like sap within the
tree ;

And ways are filled with little children
sweet,

As those of whom He said, "Come unto
me,"

With faces happy and with tripping feet,
Voices they raise in gladsome jubilee.

IX.



IN TRAPPINGS white, slow
the white horses come,
White is the hearse, and white
plumes sway above;
White flowers upon white
casket where lips dumb,
No more shall answer to a mother's love.
And those too young to understand
Death's might,
With wondering pity in each guileless eye,
On this glad morning, gaze upon the
sight,
Until the last black carriage has rolled by.
Yes, hushed each voice that waged a merry
strife;
And Christmas Holly withers on the door!
But there the lilies grow with beauty rife,
There is the face of Him who sorrow
bore—
"I am the Resurrection and the Life.
Behold; I am alive forevermore!"

X.



H, CHRIST, the awful mys-
tery we see,
The tireless shadow never-
more is strange;
Life out of death, and death
that life may be;
From death to life, life, death, in endless
change.
What lies behind the veil, we fain would
know;
That secret of the soul grows never old;
All human prides to dark oblivion go;
The graves of earth, all things of earth
enfold.
O, as a meteor vanisheth, we die;
The common end doth come to one and
all;
Thrones topple, and to low is brought the
high;
The strong, the weak, the poor, the
mighty, fall;
In nothingness all vanities doth lie;
And time o'er time is gathered like a pall.

XI.



AS THE holly-wreaths of
Christmas fade,
So all of brightest comes to
saddened close!

O, as the lily on the scythe's
keen blade,

So lie the innocent the Pale One mows.

From age to age, the will of man is broke,
Not of his giving, lease, or grant, may
stand,

His head must bow to meet the coming
stroke,

His purpose holds but as the running
sand,

O, still is need of Thy sweet acts of grace,
For fear and lust yet hold the world in
fee;

The merciless to pity slow gives place,
And tides of war flow like the tides of sea;
And dust of dust o'er all the world we
trace,

The countless dead who slumber still in
Thee.

XII.



EA, all the dead of ages
slumber still,
And their lost voices come to
us no more,
They rise not up, come forth
on plain nor hill,
Ascend to life, from ocean's sunken floor!
Yet, take our lives and mould them unto
Thine,
Take our poor love for that deep love Ye
gave;
Let Thine example through the darkness
shine,
And peace as sweet be ours unto the
grave.
O, well Ye taught, no guide can love
surpass,
That sure it leads unto the Father's throne;
This central thought did leaven all the
mass—
The mystic words, the deeds of mercy
shown.
Yea, Christ, Thou Gentle One, Thou art
the glass—
The heart supreme, wherein true love is
shown.

XIII.



THE might of loving, Christ
 revealeth us—
 May we that lesson in its
 fulness learn!
 O, falsely speaks that tongue
 and slanderous,
That doth to menace Thy sweet preach
 ments turn.
From out the clay and mire Thou lifteth
 up,
Thou mak'st us feel within our breasts the
 good.
Yea, all unseen, Thou com'st with us to
 sup,
Fill us with joy of noble brotherhood.
No; not that we are only lost and vile—
We feel a virtue on our foreheads sealed,
Within our hearts, a strength that is not
 guile,
A will that bids us not to baseness yield:
Our lives and thoughts, O may they not
 revile
The Christmas Holly, Lilies of the Field.

XIV.



O! as at morn a dove that
upward springs,
Bathes glad its plumage in
expanse of light,
So we, within Thy love, O
King of Kings,

Rejoice in hope that follows after night.
The weary soul doth ever near Thee draw;
In Thy compassion dwells a faith secure,
All tenderness and just, Thy simple law;
Thy life, all spotless as the lilies pure.
Yes; love shall triumph, blameless Prince
of Peace!

And one by one the creeds of hate decay;
Thy gentle message gives the world
release,

As time moves onward to a clearer day—
O, may Thy loving conquest never cease,
As all the future ages roll away!

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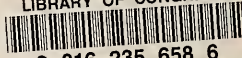
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